

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested in light of the above amendments, the following remarks and the Request for Continued Examination filed concurrently herewith.

A new title and abstract are provided as required in the office action..

Independent claim 21 is amended for clarity and the dependent claims are amended to be consistent with the changes to independent claim 21. New claims 23-25 are added to highlight further patentable aspects of this invention. Support for these amendments and new claims is provided for example in Figs. 1, 3 and 5 and paragraphs [0047]-[0051], [0059]-[0062] and [0066]-[0068] of the instant published application. (It should be noted that references herein to the specification and drawings are for illustrative purposes only and are not intended to limit the scope of the invention to any particular aspect of the referenced embodiments.)

The pending rejections are:

(1) Claims 2, 3, 6, 7, 10, 12, 14-16 and 21 were rejected, under 35 USC §102(e), as being anticipated by Borella (US 6,353,614); this rejection applies only to claims 3 and 21 as claims 2, 6, 7, 10, 12, 14-16 are now canceled..

(2) Claim 17 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Borella (US 6,353,614) in view of Belknap (US 6,763,377).

(3) Claims 8, 9, 18, 19 and 22 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Borella (US 6,353,614); this rejection is moot as applying to now canceled claims.

To the extent that any of the above rejections may be applied to the new or amended claims presented herein, the Applicants respectfully traverse as follows.

Claim 21 defines:

A server apparatus for communicating with a terminal device in a wide area network by way of a relay device with a port forwarding feature and a wide area network address in the wide area network, the relay device being connected to the server apparatus and at least one other server in a local area network, the relay device assigning the server apparatus with a first port number and assigning the other server with a second port number, the server apparatus comprising:

a port management controller which receives a first port number from the relay device and registers the first port number,

wherein the port management controller acquires the second port number assigned to the other server, and, in response to an access from the terminal device in the wide area network, provides the terminal device with the second port number. (Emphasis added)

In contrast to claim 21, Borella merely discloses a first computer network 12 which includes network devices 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24 and a router 26 to route data packets to a second computer network 30, wherein first computer network 12 has an external common network address 28 (see Fig. 1 and column 3 lines 31-52). One of the network devices 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24 (for example PC 14) receives a global unique port number from router 26 and can communicate with external second network 30 without the need for routing by router 2 (see Fig. 9, column 8, line 63 - column 9 line 30).

However, the Applicants note that Borella lacks any disclosure that one of network devices 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24 (for example PC 14) in the first network 12 acquires the port number assigned to at least one other device (for example printer 16) from router 26 and provides a device in the second network 30 with the port number. Therefore, it is submitted that Borella completely lacks any teaching of subject matter that could be deemed to anticipate the subject matter of instant claim 21.

Accordingly, claim 21 is not anticipated by Borella, and the 35 USC 102(e) rejection should be withdrawn.

The office action does not allege that Belknap and Kodama disclose anything that could be deemed relevant to the subject matter of claim 21.

Therefore, even if Borella were combined with Belknap and/or Kodama, the combination would not achieve or render obvious claim 21 or any dependent claims of claim 21.

In view of the above, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance, and a notice to that effect is respectfully solicited.

If any issues remain which may best be resolved through a telephone communication, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned at the local Washington, D.C. telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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